CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 11 August 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Michel Servais (Belgium)

GE.92-62584/5018H (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 630th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As Belgium takes up the Chair I would like to make a brief statement in my capacity as President. First of all, allow me to perform what is in fact a pleasant duty as I pay tribute to my predecessors on discharging their presidential functions. Each of them strove to guide our work dynamically in order to translate into actions and texts our common ideal of disarmament, which is set forth so well and with such restraint in the first words of the preamble to the United Nations Charter: "We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ...". All of us here know from experience how long and how difficult is the road that leads us to the achievement of this noble objective. Each of my predecessors has encouraged us along that road, and on behalf of you all I would like to thank our colleagues Ambassadors Arteaga, Calovski, Mutuale, Kinkanke, Semichi, García Moritán and O'Sullivan. For some of them the task was all the more difficult as grave and tragic events were occurring in their own countries. They deserve all the more credit for carrying out their task, and they have the right to all our gratitude.

In my reading as a student, one of the things which struck me most was the thought expressed by the philosopher Henri Berson in his work Creative Evolution, written in 1901, which I quote more or less from memory: "What characterizes the man of action is his ability to go beyond everyday events, but without neglecting them, and at the same time to view the future in a very broad perspective." All of us here are men and women of action who are noble-hearted, as my first eight months among you have enabled me to realize. What I find really extraordinary is the will that we all have to find common solutions to all the problems we have to solve. It is from this common will that I hope I will be able to extract the necessary resources to direct our work, with the help of each and every one of you, with the essential help of our Secretary-General and his competent and devoted team.

Last Friday we took an important step towards the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention. Now each of our delegations has to evaluate the overall solution which will be put before us very shortly by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador von Wagner. As he has so often told us, none of us will find in the final proposal all of the objectives we set out with. This is in the very nature of multilateral diplomacy, the "art of the possible". On behalf of all of you I congratulate and thank Ambassador von Wagner and his team for the amazing amount of work they have done since last January, and I warmly encourage him to continue his effort for just a few more weeks. To all those who have taken part in these arduous and difficult negotiations, to the members and observers in our Conference, I would ask them to do all they possibly can to convince their Governments that the work we have done in Geneva, even if it is not perfect in their eyes, is as far as we can go in the "art of the possible" I referred to a moment ago. Our objective hic et nunc remains the successful conclusion of the negotiation on chemical weapons. Our credibility is at stake. If we were to fail in finalizing our work in this area, I think it would be a waste

(The President)

of time to wonder about the fate and the future tasks of the Conference on Disarmament, because we would have shown the international community that we were unable to meet its concerns and to soothe its fears.

I am proceeding from the assumption that we will succeed in the task which was begun so many years ago. Let us submit the results of our efforts to the next General Assembly and try to surround the convention on chemical weapons with the greatest possible measure of support. We will then have proved that we are able to deal with all the other problems of disarmament, following the lines of thought that several of you have already sketched out in this forum. I will neglect none of these ideas, and I intend to abide by the proposals formulated last week by my colleague and friend, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan, by continuing the informal consultations which he undertook on the future of the Conference itself, and I intend to share my own ideas with you when the time is right. Between now and the end of this session I urge you to make the best possible use of the little time available to us to step up consultations in the various working groups and informal meetings so that we can draft our report to the United Nations General Assembly on what we have done and on the various items on our agenda.

I have no speakers on the list for today. Does any member of the Conference wish to take the floor? I see Paul O'Sullivan, the Ambassador of Australia, asking for the floor.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): Mr. President, I appreciate the chance to make a short intervention and to say first of all, of course, how pleased I am to see you presiding over our work. Last week I made a statement on behalf of the Australia Group in plenary, and Ambassador Shah of India requested that the document which I was reading be circulated as a CD document and I have asked the secretariat to do that. I believe that document is available to all delegations now.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Thank you Mr. Ambassador. Indeed I see that the document has been distributed as CD/1164. I also see the Ambassador of Argentina, Ambassador García Moritán, asking for the floor.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Allow me to express the satisfaction of my delegation, Mr. President, at seeing you in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament starting today. You are a diplomat with well-known professional skills and we welcome the fact that you are now conducting the business of our body at such a special time. You may be assured of our cooperation in your important tasks. I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan, for the energy and imagination he made available to the Conference when he was presiding over this body.

You have taken the Chair at a particularly important time for the Conference on Disarmament, not only because we are taking a historic step with the forthcoming adoption of an instrument of unique type and scope, but also because we must buckle down to the task of reflecting in our annual report to the General Assembly the state of progress for each of the items on our

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

agenda. This is the stage of the annual harvest. A delicate process that calls for a large dose of respect and a sense of perspective. A task which is necessary, without doubt one of importance, and not an easy one. A task where with great mutual respect we must put forward our national points of view, some of them in harmony and others reflecting the variety and wealth of ideas to be found in this chamber. It is the topic of the report that leads me to ask for the floor briefly this morning, since some doubts have arisen about the position of some delegations on items 2 and 3 of our agenda. And in this regard, I have received instructions to place on record some brief general remarks on these two items from the point of view of my delegation. I am not going to repeat the importance and priority we attach to the two items, items 2 and 3 of the agenda, which are clear from our active participation in informal meetings. However, I have been asked to emphasize that in our opinion, the validity and significance of the endeavours of the Conference on both those topics will be related to our capability to analyse them in the light of prevailing circumstances and political developments, in particular since the disappearance of the East-West strategic struggle and the positive trends that are to be seen in various regions. From this viewpoint it would appear more appropriate for the emphasis of the Conference on Disarmament on items 2 and 3 to be focused on practical approaches to specific issues. And we are sure that there will be no lack of ideas in undertaking this exercise. This has been the reason, among others, which led my delegation to the not always easy task of placing on record its different point of view, and which consequently prevented it from associating itself with the statement made by delegations within its own group on items 2 and 3 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador García Moritán, first of all for his kind remarks concerning the Conference. We have taken note of his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? Apparently not. Before I adjourn I would like to inform you of the situation relating to the preparation of the Conference's annual report to the General Assembly, to which I referred in my statement. I will be submitting to the Conference for adoption at the next plenary meeting the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons, which was presented by the Chairman of that Committee during our 629th plenary meeting and is contained in document CD/1160. The informal open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference started yesterday. The Chairman of those consultations, Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan, will be holding further consultations on Thursday, and maybe a third round next week, in order to help to prepare this chapter of the annual report. Consultations are continuing on agenda item 9 entitled "Transparency in armaments". They are being conducted by Ambassador Zahran of Egypt. We hope that his efforts will soon be successful. There are still matters to be resolved under items 2 and 3 of the agenda, as Ambassador García Moritán has just mentioned. I hope that we can find a solution satisfactory to all delegations before Thursday morning, so that we can hold informal consultations which will allow us to reach agreement this week. During tomorrow's presidential consultations we will be able to decide how to deal with agenda item 1, entitled "Nuclear test ban",

(The President)

in our annual report of the Conference. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space will be meeting this afternoon to consider its report to the Conference. I hope that with everybody's cooperation and goodwill, the report will be adopted today. As I stressed in my opening statement, there is still important work to be done in preparing our annual report. We will have to step up our efforts to arrive at agreement on all pending matters.

There are no more matters for today, and if there are no objections I intend to adjourn. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 13 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.